



SPACE CENTER Roundup

VOL. 41 NO. 4 LYNDON B. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER HOUSTON, TEXAS APRIL 2002

Dreaming of Mars

See page 4 for details



NASA JSC 2002e0826

High school students from 53 high schools and 35 school districts had Mars on the mind recently. The students spent two nights at JSC participating in the Fourth Annual Mars Settlement Design Competition, a highlight of JSC's annual Engineers Week activities. An industry simulation game for high school students set in an imaginary mid-21st Century scenario, the competition emulates the experience of working as a member of an aerospace company team, developing a design and operating proposal for a large human settlement on Mars. Above, an exhausted student gets some much-needed sleep in the Teague Auditorium, while other students are shown studying the map of Mars to decide where to locate their proposed base.

NASA JSC 2001e02168

VPP embraces the whole family



NASA JSC S94-25739

**By Astronaut John Casper,
Director Safety, Reliability, & Quality
Assurance Directorate**

OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program – or VPP – isn't just for work anymore. At every opportunity, we at JSC extend the spirit and intent of VPP – not just to our employees – but to every single family member as well.

It just makes good sense. You can't have a happy, productive employee if someone at home is ill or injured, so we want to share both the philosophy and the how-to of healthier, safer living. Safety has always been the first consideration for space flight. Today, as our awareness of safety and health grows, with VPP as the centerpiece, we see the ultimate goal as more involvement among individual employees.

So, how do you make VPP personal? First, get people involved at their level. As we involve more and more people who might otherwise have taken a somewhat passive role, we generate new enthusiasm and even more creative ideas.

For example, what began as an idea from an employee has emerged into a NASA-wide conference to be hosted by JSC on April 16-18, 2002, at the Gilruth Center. Planned in part by employee volunteers, the purpose of the conference is to share best practices and lessons learned, so the entire NASA family may continue to grow as an example of safety excellence. We are also involving employees in our preparation for the Center's VPP re-certification in late July.

There are other examples of what has brought employees closer to the safety program at JSC. Here's a look at some:

- ◆The JSC Safety Action Team (JSAT) is not just another committee. JSAT is composed of rotating volunteers, both civil service and contractor, who represent the voice of the workforce, individually and collectively, in keeping JSC safe and healthy. The JSAT also has a direct audience with the Deputy Center Director to discuss issues. No problem or concern is too small to warrant their attention.
- ◆The yearly Personal Safety Fair is an event that steps beyond workplace safety, addressing such diverse topics as gang violence, home security, firearms safety, skin cancer prevention, carbon monoxide poisoning in the home and even everyday problems, such as how to safely jump-start a dead battery.
- ◆The Annual Safety & Total Health Day is the day designated when all JSC personnel assess their corporate and personal safety plans through mutual exchange and education. Produced by and for the employees, the steering committee relies heavily on employee participation for the day's success. The most recent theme of which was "Make It Personal!"
- ◆The Safety & Total Health Newsletter, possibly more than any other resource, has given identity to the Center's Safety and Health program. Not only are many of the articles from our employees' own experiences, the newsletter also serves as a ready forum for questions, ideas and suggestions for safety and health education and improvement. Now in its seventh year of publication, the four-page monthly issue reaches an estimated 13,500 employees.

How does JSC know it reaches beyond the workplace and to the entire family? Feedback mostly. We frequently hear stories of how someone administered CPR learned at work or rendered first aid. One employee, so impressed with the safety program, borrowed safety videos and began teaching his children and some of their young friends basic survival techniques for home fires. Another employee saved a stranger's child from near drowning last summer. Still another initiated a fire escape plan for her group of coworkers when on travel.

So, we see impressive evidence that VPP is not left at the doorstep at the end of the workday; it's becoming a 24-hour state-of-mind. And, that's the way it ought to be – VPP isn't just for work any more.

FROM THE DESK OF ROY S. ESTESS



NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe recently presented the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal to Roy Estess for his leadership at JSC. Estess was honored at the senior management retreat at Airlie Conference Center in Warrenton, Va.

To the JSC employee family,

For the past year, it has been my honor to work alongside you here in Houston. My tenure as Center Director, although longer than expected, has been an enjoyable and educational experience for me.

In the past year, I have watched as your hard work helped the Space Station to grow in size and capability, as three Expedition crews lived and worked on board, and as we safely flew six shuttle missions and returned their crews to Earth. Your dedication to the continuing safety of space flight is a source of pride for me personally and for the entire NASA family. You deserve to be proud of all that you have accomplished and to look forward with confidence to the challenges ahead.

Remember that you are a member of only two relatively small groups of people on the Earth who know how to do what you do. The ability to select and train the right people, build the machines and tools required and then plan and execute trips into space safely is certainly a unique capability. And you are the best!

As I return to my home at the Stennis Space Center, I will take with me many cherished memories of the support you have given me in this past year and the many lessons I have learned.

I know that Jeff Howell will be equally impressed with your professionalism and dedication to our country's space program. I encourage you to welcome him and show him that you are among NASA's finest and most talented people.

I have enjoyed knowing and working with you. I will miss you.

Roy S. Estess

SOLAR has new training module available

NASA's SOLAR Online Training System has a new module available for all NASA employees. The new module is (HR-001-02D) Accessibility Awareness Training, and is designed to provide an overview of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and how that affects NASA and NASA employees.

The 1973 Rehabilitation Act includes Section 501, which prohibits discrimination against employment for individuals with disabilities; Section 504, which states that government facilities must be accessible to individuals with disabilities; and Section 508, which states that individuals with disabilities have a right to access the same electronic information as everyone else.

The training module is very user-friendly and can be completed in about 15 minutes. Every NASA employee is encouraged to take the familiarization training and to help NASA become a better workplace for all of us, including staff, the public and visitors who may have a disability. See <https://solar.msfc.nasa.gov:443/solar/delivery/public/html/newindex.htm> for the complete course listing on SOLAR.

Estess leaves his mark of excellence on JSC

By Kendra Ceule

After having spent more than a year as Acting Director of JSC, Roy Estess is returning home to Mississippi to resume his duties as Director of the John C. Stennis Space Center.

"I'm going to miss him," said Deputy Director Randy Stone. "He's become a very good friend."

Described by Stone as a "perfect gentleman who is tough when he needs to be," Estess has had an impressive career with NASA. His service spans 33 years and has taken him from Mississippi to Washington D.C. to Houston and back.

In 1980, he was named Stennis' Deputy Director, becoming its Director in 1989. Estess then fulfilled a temporary assignment to NASA Headquarters from 1992-93, serving as a special assistant to two NASA Administrators. He then returned to Stennis before his arrival at JSC in February 2001.

Stone, who has worked with Estess extensively, said he does not think it has been difficult for Estess to work in so many different environments.

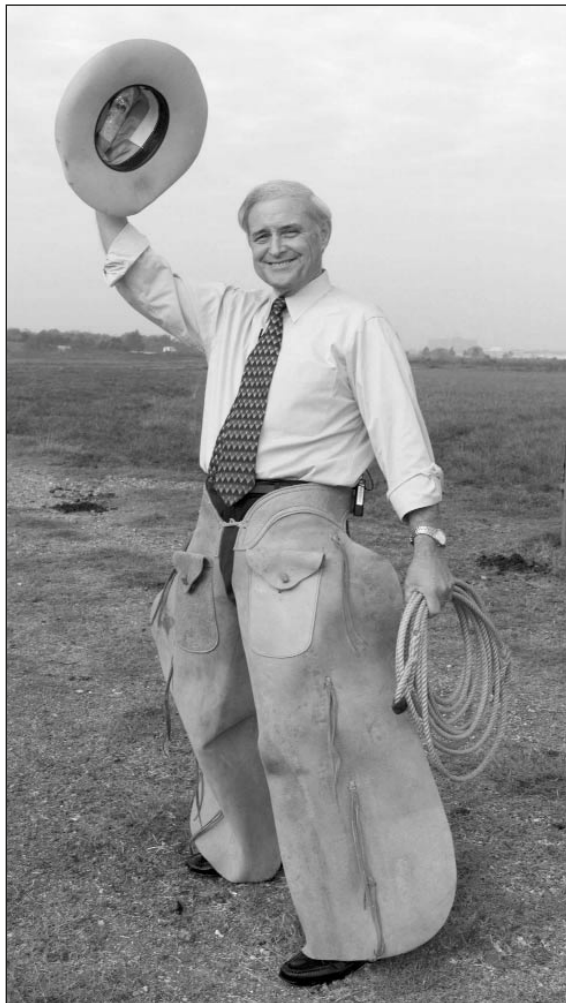
"He captures everyone's respect immediately wherever he goes," Stone said. "And most of the senior staff at JSC have known him over the years through his work at Headquarters and at Stennis. He's been highly respected for a long time."

So respected, in fact, that Estess has received multiple accolades for his federal service. It is telling that his awards not only include the Presidential Distinguished Service award, which he received twice, but also the Alumni Fellow of Mississippi State University.

According to Dan Carpenter, Director of Public Affairs, Estess is adept at balancing his leadership roles with a willingness to listen to suggestions from others.

"He is very open to input and ideas from staff," Carpenter said, "and yet is very capable of making the decisions that need to be made."

Sue Rainwater, Branch Chief of Mechanical Boosters Maintenance Systems, said Estess did an effective job of committing himself to his new post even though he knew it was temporary. "He never acted like a short-timer," she said. ❖



Well-respected Howell named JSC Center Director



NASA JSC 2002e05118

Jefferson Davis Howell, Jr., has been named Director of the Johnson Space Center and assumed his duties this month. Howell, a retired U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant General, is only the eighth person to serve as Director in the Center's 40-year history.

"Gen. Howell is a true patriot and leader with more than three decades of executive management and financial management experience," said NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe. "Throughout his military and civilian careers, Jeff has been a leader, an innovator and a team builder. He's the right person to lead the NASA Center that's the cornerstone of our human space flight operations."

Howell served as Senior Vice President and Program Manager for the Safety, Reliability and Quality Assurance contract at JSC. The contract focuses

on safety and mission assurance for the Space Shuttle and International Space Station programs. He was employed by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). He earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in economics at the University of Texas.

Howell had been with SAIC since February 1999, when he first served as Deputy Program Manager of the safety contract. He was named Program Manager in August 1999. Howell managed more than 525 people in support of a contract focused on safety and mission assurance in support of the Space Shuttle and International Space Station programs.

"This is a tremendous honor," Howell said. "The people who work at the Johnson Space Center are among the best and brightest in our industry with a history of incredible accomplishment. As we face the challenges of the upcoming year, we will work together, maintaining our commitment to safety and bringing the benefits of space home to the people of Earth."

He went on to say, "I also want to congratulate Roy Estess on the excellent job he has done here over the past year and thank him for his dedication to NASA." ❖